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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/850,328	05/07/2001	Jay S. Walker	00-101	2523
22927	7590	05/18/2007		
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STAMFORD, CT 06905				
			EXAMINER	
			CHAMPAGNE, DONALD	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3622	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			,05/18/2007	PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/850,328

Applicant(s)

WALKER ET AL.

Examiner

Donald L. Champagne

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 01 March 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25, 27-75 and 80-95 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25, 27-75 and 80-95 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 07 May 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114*

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 1 March 2007 has been entered.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112*

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1-25, 27-75 and 80-95 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In every independent claim, either "one subsidizer different from the at least one merchant" (e.g., claim 1 line 8) or "third party different from the merchant" (e.g., at claim 82, line 3), is indefinite.
4. The common meaning of "third party" is an entity that is independent of some other first and second parties. However, business ownership is arbitrary and readily changeable. Suppose the first and second parties each owned 50% of a subsidizer: would said subsidizer still be a "third party"? (Or would it be a 1-½ party?) Alternatively, suppose that some fourth entity owned 50% of the common stock of each of the three parties: which is the third party, or the first or second party for that matter?
5. The amendment to "third party different from the merchant" does not overcome indefiniteness, first because "different" is not defined. The examiner interprets "different" to mean an ownership limitation, because that is implied in the disclosure (para. [0042] of the published application, US 2002016577A1). Assume then that said third party is a supplier to a merchant, Wal-Mart, for example. What happens if Wal-Mart decides to become vertically integrated and buys said "third party" supplier? The "third party" disappears, and any patent with such a limitation would presumably become worthless with respect that those entities.

Now what happens if Wal-Mart decides to form a joint venture and sells half of the former "third party" to another supplier? Is the hypothetical patent limited to a "third party" now supposed to apply to this "1-½ party"? The possibilities are endless. These ownership limitations are imprecise and indefinite.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and 35 USC § 103***

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1-18, 20-23, 27-71, 75, and 80-95 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated Chen et al. (US006741969B1).
9. Chen et al. teaches (independent claims 1, 56, 60, 65, 69, 71, 75, 80-82 and 92-95) a method, product and system/apparatus for adjusting prices of one or more items, particularly at a restaurant, the method comprising:

providing an indication of a plurality of products (*menus*, col. 48-52) each of said plurality of products having an initial price (*the amount to be charged*, col. 7 lines 5-6) and being associated with at least one merchant (*a restaurant*, col. 1 lines 44-51);

providing an indication of an available price adjustment (*the incentive*, col. 7 lines 5-6);

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providing an indication of a subsidy offer (*the incentive*, col. 7 lines 5-6, or *promotions*, col. 20 lines 3-4) associated with said price adjustment, said subsidy offer including at least one qualifying action (paying for the meal), and being associated with at least one subsidizer/third party (*manufacturers* or *suppliers*, col. 20 lines 4-5) different from the at least one merchant; and

determining a second price (*the amount to be charged* minus the *incentive*, col. 7 lines 5-6) for at least one of said plurality of products.

Chen et al. also teaches presentation of a payment means (col. 7 lines 1-5 and 6-11), which reads on receiving an indication of a commitment to complete said qualifying action.

10. Chen et al. also teaches at the citations given above claims 2-6, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 27-34, 36, 37, 39-52, 53 (inherently), 54, 63, 64, 68, 70, 83-88, 90 and 91.
11. Chen et al. also teaches claim 7 (auctioning the subsidy/*gift certificate*, col. 1 lines 44-51); claims 8-15, 35, 38, 57-59, 61, 62, 66 and 67, for a variety of disclosed actions, any of which read on a "qualifying action"; claim 16 (when the auction expires, col. 2 line 24); claim 22; and claims 55 and 89, where the subsidizer inherently decide how to allocate the aggregate subsidy/*incentive*.
12. Claims 19, 24, 25 and 72-74 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over Chen et al. (US006741969B1). Chen et al. does not teach verification. Because verification is common sense ("measure twice, cut once") and easy to achieve (Waiter, will I get the discount if I order this item?), it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to add price verification to the teachings of Chen et al.

### ***Response to Arguments***

13. Applicant's arguments filed with an amendment on 1 March 2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. They have been addressed by revision of the rejection.

### ***Conclusion***

14. This is a continuation of applicant's earlier Application No. 09850328. All claims are drawn to the same invention claimed in the earlier application and could have been finally rejected on the grounds and art of record in the next Office action if they had been entered in the

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earlier application. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL** even though it is a first action in this case. See MPEP § 706.07(b). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

15. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the mailing date of this final action.
16. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Donald L. Champagne whose telephone number is 571-272-6717. The examiner can normally be reached from 9:30 AM to 8 PM ET, Monday to Thursday. The examiner can also be contacted by e-mail at [donald.champagne@uspto.gov](mailto:donald.champagne@uspto.gov), and *informal* fax communications (i.e., communications not to be made of record) may be sent directly to the examiner at 571-273-6717. The fax phone number for all *formal* matters is 571-273-8300.
17. The examiner's supervisor, Eric Stamber, can be reached on 571-272-6724.
18. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).
19. **AFTER FINAL PRACTICE** – Consistent with MPEP § 706.07(f) and 713.09, prosecution generally ends with the final rejection. Examiner will grant an interview after final only when applicant presents compelling evidence that “disposal or clarification for appeal may be accomplished with only nominal further consideration” (MPEP § 713.09). The burden is on applicant to demonstrate this requirement, preferably in no more than 25 words.

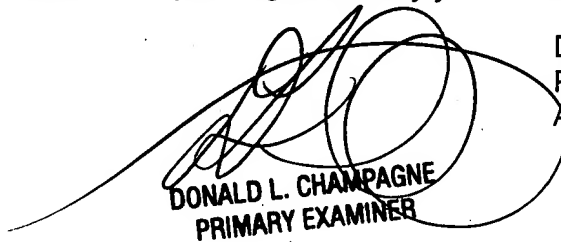
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Amendments are entered after final only when the amendments will clearly simplify issues, or put the case into condition for allowance, clearly and without additional search or more than nominal consideration.

20. Applicant may have after final arguments considered and amendments entered by filing an RCE.

21. **ABANDONMENT** – If examiner cannot by telephone verify applicant's intent to continue prosecution, the application is subject to abandonment six months after mailing of the last Office action. The agent, attorney or applicant point of contact is responsible for assuring that the Office has their telephone number. Agents and attorneys may verify their registration information including telephone number at the Office's web site, [www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov). At the top of the home page, click on Site Index. Then click on Agent & Attorney Roster in the alphabetic list, and search for your registration by your name or number.

10 May 2007



DONALD L. CHAMPAGNE  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

Donald L. Champagne  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3622